

our Nation's creativity and innovation. Following Russia's launch of Sputnik, President Kennedy challenged our country in 10 years to be the first in the world to land a man on the Moon. And it was Neil Armstrong, an Ohioan, who did it. If we can put a man on the Moon, there is no reason why we cannot be the first country in the world to not have to rely predominantly on oil for our transportation needs.

It is time we undertook a similar Apollo-like project to establish clean, reliable and domestically abundant energy alternatives and in turn usher in a new era of American freedom and independence.

And through this new Apollo program, we must encourage further advances in biofuels, electric-hybrid plug-in vehicles and fuel cells.

One of the best shots we have in significantly reducing our reliance on foreign oil is plug-in hybrid vehicles. If half our fleet of 240 million vehicles were converted to electric-hybrids, we could reduce our oil imports by 4 to 5 million BPD. Just doing this could cut our reliance on foreign oil by 40 percent.

Americans today demand action. And they demand we come together in a bipartisan fashion to solve this crisis. I commend my colleagues in the "Group of 10" on their efforts to find sensible solutions to this crisis. While their bill is not perfect, it would be my hope that we can continue to work together to move our country towards energy independence.

Regardless of what one thinks of the specifics of the bipartisan proposal, this is the way we should be trying to get things done around here—Senators of good will from both parties coming together, with everyone willing to give up a little of what they want in order to move the country forward. My greatest frustration in the Senate is the partisanship and game playing. We must end the gridlock and put the people's business first.

I honestly believe that the best message we can send to OPEC, those investing in the oil market, and indeed the entire world, is that we are mad as heck and won't take it anymore. We must demonstrate that we are going to find more by going after every drop of oil that we can responsibly drill and that we are going to use less by undertaking a new Apollo program, and continue to conserve and become more energy efficient.

I envision an America where in 10 years we have enough oil to take care of our needs. I imagine an America that is the least reliant nation in the world on oil. An America where our economy is not threatened, an America that has created thousands of jobs by finding more and developing technologies that use less. It will be an America that has gone from the bottom of the barrel to the top. Who's national security is without threat because we have removed the potential of energy being used as a "weapon"

against us by those who do not share our values?

We must put aside our differences and come together to reaffirm our Nation's independence for a second time. We can usher in a new era of prosperity and a guarantee that in the new global economy we will maintain our position as the greatest military and economic power in the world.

I yield the floor and suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

### THE ECONOMY

Mr. CASEY. Mr. President, I know it is getting late in the evening, and we are at the end of a long day for a lot of people in our country. I want to talk about not just the economic crisis our families and our country are living through right now, but also what we have seen over the last couple of years, and certainly in the last 7 to almost 8 years now.

I think it is instructive to look at where we were 7 years ago and where we are today. By virtually every indicator, it is a much tougher world for a lot of families, especially working families and poor families. On the one hand, you have an increase in the number of Americans living in poverty; by one estimate, more than 5.5 million more people. So now that number goes above 38 million Americans.

Health care, there are so many different ways to look at it. I know in my home State of Pennsylvania, since 2000, family premiums—the cost of health care for a family—are up by almost 50 percent, between 45 and 50 percent. If you look at it in another way, in terms of overall health care, we have seen these national numbers of 47 million Americans uninsured right now in the country. Some say it dropped to 45 million. Whatever that number is—whether it is 45 million or 47 million—it is way too high.

I think the current administration has done nothing to address that—no leadership by the President, no prioritization of that issue as a compelling national issue. There are 9 million American children with no health insurance, and the President vetoed the expansion of the Children's Health Insurance Program, which, as the Presiding Officer knows, got almost 70 votes in this Chamber more than once.

There are so many different ways to look at these numbers. In the last year, over 605,000 Americans lost their jobs. The mortgage crisis, the foreclosure crisis is in the lives of so many families. I live in a State which, if you compare it to other States, relatively, has not had as much of a problem as some

States such as California or Nevada or others.

But in the month of August of this year—August of 2008—versus August of 2007, if you compare it month to month for those 2 years—August 2007 to August 2008—the foreclosure rate in Pennsylvania is up some 60 percent, much higher than the national rate. So even in a State which has not felt the same effects, relatively, as these other States, now the foreclosure crisis is closing in on places and on families in Pennsylvania. In so many indicators, we can see it.

We can see it obviously on Wall Street in the headlines. I do not need to repeat what we have seen in the newspaper. But I think when we look at our own communities, we can see the same is true. I am not going to read all of this document. I am going to have it printed in the RECORD. I am going to read the headline and ask that the document be made a part of the RECORD: "Recent major Pennsylvania plant closings and/or layoffs." I ask unanimous consent to have this document printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

#### RECENT MAJOR PENNSYLVANIA PLANT CLOSINGS AND/OR LAYOFFS

##### NORTHEAST

Luzerne County, Wilkes-Barre: Geisinger Health System in South Wilkes-Barre is laying off 451 employees, primarily those who work in inpatient services, by September 2008.

Luzerne County, Mountaintop: Fairchild Semiconductor International is laying off 331 employees, this was announced 7/24/2008.

##### LEHIGH VALLEY

Lehigh County, Allentown: Mack Trucks Inc. is moving 800+ jobs from Allentown to North Carolina when it consolidates its headquarters by the end of 2009. This will be partially offset when Mack moves 200+ jobs from Virginia into its Macungie manufacturing facility by the end of 2008. This was announced on 8/14/2008.

##### SOUTHEAST

Montgomery County, King of Prussia: Idearc Media Corporation laid off some 120 CWA members at the end of 2007 from its facility in King of Prussia. The workers there produced advertisements for the yellow-pages phone book. Idearc moved this production to India and laid off half of the 240 employed at this facility.

Bucks County, Warrington: MeadWestvaco Consumer Packaging Group LLC is laying off 145 when they close their packaging manufacturing plant in Warrington, which was announced on 5/15/2008.

Northumberland County, Elysburg: Paper Magic Group Inc. is laying off 312 employees when it closes its Elysburg facility. This was announced on 1/4/2008.

Berks County, Reading: Hershey Inc. is laying off 274 when it closes its Reading facility, announced on 3/14/2008.

Montgomery County, Fort Washington: Chase Home Lending is laying off 266 employees, announced on 5/29/2008.

##### CENTRAL AND SOUTHCENTRAL

York County, York: Harley Davidson is laying off 300 as part of a nationwide layoff of 730. The layoffs were scheduled to begin this month.

Fulton County, McConnellsburg: JLG Industries is laying off 375 employees by September of this year. They produce heavy aerial lifts and work platforms. It was announced in July that they will be laying off 250 employees in McConnellsburg, 100 at Shippensburg, and 25 at Bedford.

Centre County, Bellefonte: Bolton Metal Products is laying off 223 when it closes its Bellefonte facility due to increased foreign competition. This was announced on 2/4/2008. A letter under your signature was sent to the Department of Labor in support of the workers when they were denied TAA benefits. The workers then won the benefits on their appeal.

York County, Red Lion: Yorktowne Inc. is laying off 349 employees when it closes its plant #6 in Red Lion. This was announced on 1/23/2008.

Lancaster County, East Petersburg: Sterling Financial is laying off 325 employees in its East Petersburg facility, which was announced on 4/15/2008.

#### SOUTHWEST

Allegheny County, Bethel Park: Washington Mutual is laying off 247 when it closes its facility in Bethel Park. This was announced on 4/9/2008.

#### NORTHWEST

Erie County, Corry: Erie Plastics is laying off 189 employees, announced on 2/15/2008.

Mr. CASEY. This is a brief summary of plant closings that involve hundreds of jobs in particular communities: Luzerne County—the county right next to my home county—451 employees at Geisinger Health System losing their jobs; 331 employees at the Fairchild Semiconductor International plant being laid off. That was announced in July. In Lehigh Valley, at Mack Trucks: more than 800 jobs being lost in our State and moving to another State. In Montgomery County—a very prosperous county in southeastern Pennsylvania—a corporation there laying off 120 employees. In Bucks County, a company there laying off 145 employees. In Berks County, Hershey Incorporated laying off 274 employees. That is just in the southeast.

Then you go to central Pennsylvania. In York County, a plant there—Harley Davidson, in fact—laying off 300 employees; a plant in Fulton County—a very small county in Pennsylvania—laying off 375 employees.

It goes on from there: hundreds and hundreds of people losing their jobs, just in some communities in Pennsylvania, just this year. So that is exhibit A in terms of job loss in Pennsylvania.

But also I think it gets back to this whole question of about what the Congress can do. We look at what has been happening on Wall Street—the loss of wealth, the loss of confidence—but what is happening on Wall Street mirrors what has happened in the lives of a lot of families. When you lose your house—and because of foreclosure, you are forced out of your home—you lose not only your home, the place you live, the place your family lives—a sense of your own, and the reality, I should say, of your own net worth—but as much as all that, you lose your dignity. So many families have lost that dignity. I think as much as we in the Congress,

for the next couple of weeks and months, even leading into a new administration, will debate policies that pertain to financial markets—what about credit, what about capital, all these terms, “liquidity,” the things we are hearing a lot about as they pertain to Wall Street—and regulation is going to be an important part of what we do—but as we debate all of those issues, I think we have to get back to the fundamentals about why we are living through this nightmare.

Part of it is the failure of this administration to do something in an aggressive way about regulation. Part of it is greed. But what resulted from that greed and from that inability to regulate markets and to oversee mortgages in an appropriate way is the fact that we have foreclosures. So if the Congress wants to respond to this in a positive way, to get something done, we have to do something about foreclosures, to bring that number down, to keep people in their homes and thereby to strengthen neighborhoods and our economy overall. If we keep neighborhoods strong, keep people in their homes, it will affect the whole world's financial markets and certainly our economy.

So what do we do? Well, I think what we can do—there will be a lot of proposals about how to get there—but just broadly—and I will conclude with these thoughts—to get there broadly what we have to do is to say: If in the July legislation—which was not everything that all of us wanted; I know the Presiding Officer and I probably wanted a lot more in that bill than we got, but what we did in that bill was to create an opportunity for 400,000 people to stay in their homes by getting the borrower and the lender in the same room, so to speak, to work out a modification, to work out some arrangement to keep that family in that home. What we have to do is take that 400,000 and expand it exponentially to at least a million and, beyond that, if possible, to do everything possible to keep those families in their homes.

If there is nothing else the Congress does for the next couple of months but focusing on the prevention of foreclosures, we will have contributed significantly to preventing some of the trauma we see on Wall Street and, as we have been hearing over and over again, on the Main Streets of America in the lives of our families.

There are a lot of ways to do that. One of those strategies is making sure that the prevention of predatory lending is a higher priority. But I think focusing on individual mortgages and the relationship between an individual lender and that homeowner is going to be critical to this. So we have to expand what we have already done and do more on keeping people in their homes.

We will talk more about it. But do you know what. All the answers to these questions do not simply reside in what we talk about in the Senate or what happens in the House or here in

Washington. A lot of good ideas are coming from our communities.

I point to one example. In Philadelphia—one of the places in Pennsylvania where the foreclosure rate has been far too high, even though other places have escaped it so far—in the city of Philadelphia, the court system, Judge Darnell Jones, and others, the mayor of the city, Michael Nutter, a very effective and capable mayor, came together with activists and people who understand how to keep people in their homes and said: Let's develop a program at the local level, and let's try to implement it.

They developed the Residential Mortgage Foreclosure Diversion Pilot Program. I have spoken about this before. But it is a kind of example we should expand upon and use as an example to keep people in their homes. In a word or two, it is an early intervention program. Instead of letting these mortgages go so far out of control where someone cannot stay in their home, they intervene earlier. The courts are able to facilitate loan workouts and other solutions to keep homeowners and their families in their homes.

It is an effort, as I said before, by the city and the mayor's office, Mayor Nutter, of being able to bring together housing advocates, volunteer attorneys, lenders, and servicers who all share the same goal of keeping people in their homes.

Now, the interests of these groups are divergent, but they have set aside those differences, and they realize that stemming the tide of foreclosure helps everyone. It obviously helps the homeowner and the family and the community. But it also helps lenders and, in a very substantial way, our economy.

So that is one example. We will talk more about it later in detail. But we need to enact policies that make sure those kinds of good examples coming from our communities become part of national policy. If we do that—if we are able to keep more and more, instead of 400,000 people staying in their homes, we make that 1 million, or even higher than that; if we do that, I think we can begin to stabilize the root cause of a lot of our problems.

In addition to that, we have to do more in regulation. We have to do much more in holding government agencies accountable that should have been the cop on the beat, so to speak, when it comes to what happens to lending practices and to mortgage practices.

So there is much to do, but I think the best thing we can do is focus on the root cause of this, which is foreclosures and the prevention of those foreclosures through counseling, through good programs, and through bringing people together at a time of real stress in the life of families. I think we can do that. I think we have done that in the past. I think it is a bipartisan wish. What we are going to need here is leadership beyond the finger-pointing that we often see here in Washington.

So if we bring that spirit to this priority of stabilizing our economy, I think we can move forward and have a much stronger economy. If we choose not to and choose to focus on issues that will divide us when it comes to foreclosures, I think we are going to be off on the wrong track.

#### INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY AND WATER COMMISSION TRAGEDY

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I would like to take a few minutes today to express my sadness regarding the tragedy this week involving officials with the International Boundary and Water Commission, IBWC. On Monday, an airplane carrying U.S. Commissioner Carlos Marin; Mexican Commissioner Arturo Herrera; and also Jake Brisbin, Jr., Executive Director of the Rio Grande Council of Governments; and Matthew Peter Juneau, the pilot, was reported as missing when it failed to arrive at its destination of Presidio, TX. Wreckage of that aircraft was located yesterday, and it was confirmed that there were no survivors. I offer my condolences to the family members of all of the individuals who were on the aircraft.

I would like to say a few words in particular about Commissioner Marin, who I had the pleasure of working with on a range of IBWC matters in New Mexico. Commissioner Marin was appointed to his position by President Bush in December 2006 after 27 years of service to the Commission. Previous to that, he worked with the Bureau of Reclamation after receiving a bachelor's degree in civil, engineering. He took over the IBWC at a tumultuous time, and quickly gained the respect of his colleagues and employees with calm and steady leadership of the agency. He was a problem-solver, focused on the IBWC's mission, and someone who was always readily accessible to my staff and me. Recently, my staff worked with him on the management plan for the Rio Grande in southern New Mexico. Commissioner Marin was instrumental in moving this project along after an impasse of many years. We will miss his effective leadership and his warm personality. My sympathies go out to his wife Rosa and two adult children.

#### DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, the 2008 Defense authorization bill contains a number of provisions that I strongly support. I support a pay raise for our troops, elimination of the SBP-DIC offset—which I was pleased to vote for—and extra funding for barracks maintenance. I also strongly support the provision limiting the outsourcing of private security functions in war zones. During this time of incredible strain on the women and men serving in the Armed Forces, it is essential that we provide them the best quality of life we possibly can.

However, I voted in opposition to the bill because it contains \$70 billion to continue the war in Iraq but no language mandating that we safely redeploy our troops. Seven years after September 11, we remain bogged down in a conflict that is undermining our efforts to combat those who attacked us. We must redeploy from Iraq so that we can focus on the global threat posed by al-Qaida and its affiliates, particularly with respect to al-Qaida's safe haven in Pakistan along the Afghanistan border.

#### IDAHOANS SPEAK OUT ON HIGH ENERGY PRICES

Mr. CRAPO. Mr. President, in mid-June, I asked Idahoans to share with me how high energy prices are affecting their lives, and they responded by the hundreds. The stories, numbering over 1,000, are heartbreaking and touching. To respect their efforts, I am submitting every e-mail sent to me through [energy\\_prices@crapo.senate.gov](mailto:energy_prices@crapo.senate.gov) to the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD. This is not an issue that will be easily resolved, but it is one that deserves immediate and serious attention, and Idahoans deserve to be heard. Their stories not only detail their struggles to meet everyday expenses, but also have suggestions and recommendations as to what Congress can do now to tackle this problem and find solutions that last beyond today. I ask unanimous consent to have today's letters printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

My family runs a purebred cattle ranch. Two years ago, my oldest son decided he wanted to join us in the ranching business, so we doubled our cowherd and made some changes. It was a challenge to feed another family, but one we were willing to take. Last year, we had to refinance the farm to get a little breathing room, but within one year, the margin we gave ourselves by refinancing was gone with the skyrocketing cost of feed, fertilizer, and fuel—all as a result of the cost of fuel. Now our power rates have increased, also. There was not money in the budget for my son and he had to take a job in town. Now I am left with twice the work and half the help.

I have two other sons that stated recently a business installing dairy lockups. They have taken on a lot of debt for equipment and also have to support a family. Within just a few months, they have seen the rising cost of diesel eat into their business to the point that I think they will have to take out bankruptcy and try to piece their lives together afterwards. A pretty rough start for a 22-year-old newlywed and an 18-year-old. They watch their spending, but right now they are maxed out on their credit because of fuel costs and cannot even afford to get to their job sites. All our government officials need to be doing more. Absolutely open up our own oil fields. We need more refineries and more alternative fuel sources. I think hydrogen has excellent possibilities. And Idaho is an excellent source of wind. Something has got to be done and I mean now or this state will blow away.

— MIKE, *Gooding*.

Short term: gas prices, depending on how soon we can start pumping oil, let us start

drilling and refining here in the US. Same with nuclear power.

Long term: Honda just announced a new hydrogen fuel cell hybrid car that is three times as fuel efficient as the current hybrids. Will not be ready for about ten years, they say. Let us have these vehicles ready to purchase in three years, not ten. Same with electric cars. And give these businesses some kind of a [tax] break to keep the price of these vehicles down so everyone can afford to buy them, not just the movie stars in Hollywood!

— RICK.

Please put politics aside and get serious about solving the energy crisis. You are the leaders of this country. You are representing the country very poorly. I am so amazed and ashamed of the way our leaders are putting themselves before the good of the country. Our forefathers were patriots! There are a few of you that are trying to solve the energy crisis. Quit throwing road blocks in front of those people.

My husband and I are retired, and the high cost of fuel is really hurting us. We live in a small town in Idaho, and we do not have public transportation. It is not like living in a city. Everything is spread out, so we have to drive almost everywhere. We have no choice. We bought a fifth wheel and a diesel truck when we retired. We planned on taking a summer trip in our RV to the Oregon Coast, but that will not happen. We just hope that we can take our RV to Arizona this winter. We have saved all our lives for our retirement, and the energy situation is wiping out our savings.

Let us see action [to back up the words we hear from our leaders]. Get off of foreign oil and become independent. Do the right thing and plan ahead. If it takes ten years to develop domestic oil wells, then get with it. This is a serious problem that is really hurting Americans.

— LINDA, *Fruitland*.

I am concerned about the price of energy. Gas prices have gone up, and this is disconcerting and expensive. I am a mother of three and a devoted conservative. Last year we made plans to take a vacation on the Oregon coast this summer. Since we made those plans, gas prices have almost doubled. Now that we paid our deposit on the beach house, we cannot really back out, and it is still unaffordable to fly a family of five there, but we are afraid it is going to cost \$600-900 in gas just to get there. When we made our plans, we were thinking more in the \$300-400 range. But if this sounds bad, my brother and his wife who are going with us, both schoolteachers, with their six kids between the two of them (it is a blended family) will have to take two cars. So what was once a fun affordable summer vacation is now in the ridiculous range, just to get there, without food or hotel or fees for anything fun.

Why can't we drill for oil here in America? Why is our dirt so much more sacred than the dirt in the rest of the world? Let us look in our own country's wealth of resources to address this issue.

I am also highly supportive of exploring all our other resources: nuclear, water, wind, coal, etc. I know there are Native American reservations that want to build nuclear plants and they have been forbidden because of safety concerns. They should be allowed to build these plants, and I believe Americans are committed to the safety of our citizens in the process of exploring these other options. I am all for nuclear energy, with it is cost effectiveness and cleanliness.